

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 SES-02 SAA-01 SSM-03 IO-13 /095 W
-----122689 271344Z /43

R 271013Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9743
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 6931

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, AF
SUBJECT: PLO-AL FATAH DELEGATION COMPLETES VISIT TO KABUL

1. SUMMARY: A PLO DELEGATION HEADED BY AL-FATHA REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSNI YUNUS AND INCLUDING RABHI HOLUM, HEAD OF THE PLO'S ARABIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, PAID A WELL-PUBLICIZED "GOOD-WILL" VISIT TO KABUL FROM AUGUST 13-20. THE PLO REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH A NUMBER OF HIGH-LEVEL AFGHAN LEADERS INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF STATE NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAQI AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN. FEW SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS OF THE VISIT

HAVE YET BEEN DISCLOSED, ALTHOUGH THE TWO SIDES REPORTEDLY AGREED, "IN PRINCIPLE," TO OPEN A PLO OFFICE IN KABUL AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

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STRENGTHENED TIES WITH THE PLO WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH OF THIS REGIME, AND THE VISIT MAY HAVE BEEN A MEANS FOR BOTH PARTIES TO ESTABLISH THEIR RESPECTIVE BONA FIDE S:
AFGHANISTAN AS A SUPPORTER OF "LIBERATION MOVEMENTS," AND THE PLO AS A "RESPECTABLE" MOVEMENT SUPPORTED BY LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENTS. END OF SUMMARY.

2. THE PLO DELEGATION ARRIVED IN KABUL ON AUGUST 13, AND DURING ITS "GOOD WILL " VISIT HELD MEETINGS WITH A NUMBER OF DRA OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF STATE NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN. YUNUS AND HOLUM ALSO MET WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE JAUZJANI, AND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DOST. ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS, THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION, HUSNI YUNUS, A MEMBER OF AL-FATAH'S REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL , DELIVERED A MESSAGE TO TARAKI FROM YASSIR ARAFAT. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER WERE NOT PUBLICLY DISCLOSED, NOR WAS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DELEGATION'S DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER AFGHAN LEADERS (MOST OF WHICH REPORTEDLY COVERED "MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST"). YUNUS DEPARTED ON AUGUST 17 ALTHOUGH HOLUM REMAINED UNTIL THE 20TH. NO COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED.

3. DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN THE VISIT DIVULGED LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE REGARDING WHAT MAY HAVE TRANSPIRED. THE AFGHAN OFFICIAL GENERALLY DOWNPLAYED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT, BUT REVEALED THAT THE TWO SIDES "AGREE D IN PRINCIPLE" TO OPEN A PLO OFFICE IN KABUL AT AN UNDETERMINED DATE. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PREVIOUS REGIME OF MOHAMMAD DAOUD HAD LIKewise DECIDED TO PERMIT A PLO OFFICE HERE, AND TARAKI'S NEW REVOLUTIONARY REGIME IS ONLY CARRYING FORWARD THIS POLICY.

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4. A USUALLY WELL-INFORMED ARAB DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE ALSO CONSIDERED THE VISIT AS DEVOID OF MUCH SUBSTANCE, AND VIEWED IT AS ESSENTIALLY A PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT WHICH SERVED BOTH SIDES' INTERESTS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IRAQI DIPLOMATS HERE ARE VERY CONCERNED FOR THEIR SECURITY, TO THE EXTENT THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE STAFF MAN THE IRAQI EMBASSY AROUND THE CLOCK. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, ATTRIBUTE THIS NERVOUSNESS TO THE PLO VISIT, BUT RATHER TO THE RECENT PALESTINIAN-IRAQI VIOLENCE AROUND THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN PAKISTAN.

5. COMMENT: OTHER SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLO OFFICE IN KABUL , BUT DAOUD'S MORE CONSERVATIVE REGIME, DESPITE ITS CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR ITS MUSLIM BRETHREN IN THE DISPUTE WITH ISRAEL, PROBABLY INTENDED TO DELAY THE ACTUAL OPENING OF SUCH AN OFFICE AD INFINITUM, IF POSSIBLE. IN VIEW OF THE DRA'S MORE RADICAL FOREIGN POLICY STANCE, HOWEVER, AFGHAN RELATIONS WITH THE PLO MAY STRENGTHEN, ESPECIALLY

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GIVEN THIS REGIME'S HIGHLY TOUTED MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF STATES SUCH AS SOUTH YEMEN, CUBA, ANGOLA, ETC. THUS, THE PLO MAY HAVE AN OFFICE IN KABUL SOMETIME IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY, IN FACT, NOT BE MUCH COMFORT TO OUR IRAQI COLLEAGUES HERE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HOWEVER, EVERY EMBASSY IN KABUL HAS ARMED AFGHAN GUARDS STATIONED AT ITS ENTRANCE, AND HEAVILY ARMED ARMY TROOPS ARE STILL PREVALENT THROUGHTOUT THE CITY, ESPECIALLY AROUND CERTAIN SENSITIVE LOCATIONS. THUS, TERRORIST ACTIONS BY EITHER PRO OR ANTI-PLO FORCES WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE RISKY AND DIFFICULT IN KABUL THAN IN OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE REGION.

6. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, THE PLO REPRESENTATIVES CAME TO KABUL TO EXPLAIN

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,
AND SOLICIT AFGHAN SUPPORT FOR THEIR ANTIAISRAELI POSITIONS AND THEIR POSITION IN THEIR QUARREL WITH THE IRAQIS, AS WELL AS TO DEMONSTRATE PUBLICLY THE PLO'S ACCEPTABILITY TO LEGITIMATE AND RECOGNIZED NON-

ARAB GOVERNMENTS. FOR THEIR PART, BY ENTERTAINING THE PLO DELEGATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, THE AFGHANS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR SUPPORT FOR "LIBERATION MOVEMENTS," AND, CONCEIVABLY THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SECOND RADICAL POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, ESPECIALLY IF A PLO OFFICE APPEARS HERE SOON. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, HOW CLOSER AFGHAN-PLO TIES WOULD AFFECT THE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PURSE STRINGS OF SUCH ARAB REGIMES AS LIBYA AND SAUDI ARABIA, WHOSE ASSISTANCE THE AFGHAN REGIME GREATLY NEEDS.
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